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ABSTRACT

This article describes some of the frustrating obstacles that a scholar researching the field of applied Chicano linguistics is likely to encounter. Good scholarship in this field is found primarily in dissertations. Sources of bad scholarship (i.e., lacking is scholarly rigor) include theses done in colleges of education, articles in teachers' magazines, and monographs written by teacher trainers. Interesting "non-" scholarship emerges in journalism, in arguments for scholastic curricula, and in many conversations regarding Chicano linguistics. The principal conclusions of the article include: (1) A bibliography on a subject such as bilingualism or language contact is likely to be more useful than a bibliography which is defined ethnically; (2) Traditional sources of information--theses, dissertations, articles, monographs, etc.--are difficult to use for a variety of reasons; and (3) Some non-traditional sources, such as journalism, school directives, and conversations, provide much useful and interesting information (Author/DB)

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Good, Bad, and Non-scholarship in Applied Chicano Linguistics

For the past year or so I have been working on this topic under the sponsorship of the National Endowment for the Humanities. Two types of judgments have been my daily fare in this enterprise and they are indicated in the title. One has to do with critical judgment of the scholarship. That is relatively easy to do as long as one is foolhardy, courageous, masochistic or a combination of these. What is harder is to decide what "applied", "scholarship", "Chicano" and "linguistics" mean. This is also more interesting and perhaps in the final analysis more valuable.

The necessity of descriptors in a bibliographic study are obvious to anyone who has thought about such matters very much. Words like "Chicano" in my title establish limits; they allow the scholar to legitimately leave out some things. I began my bibliography with very broad limits. My intention was to read all of the literature on "linguistics/language teaching and the Mexican-American."

Several factors led to a more precise statement of goal. From the beginning I had not wanted to cover the literature Teschner, Bills, and Craddock call "the Hispanic tradition." This is the kind of work best typified by the work of Espinosa. In fact, I did not really want to do any studies of the Spanish language per se because I did not feel competent to judge their merit. Teschner, Bills, and Craddock were already doing that and as it turns out - extremely well - so I decided to focus on scholarship other than that which had to do primarily with Spanish.

Similarly, Teschner, Bills, and Craddock declined to include any scholarship on language education.

This appears to divide things up rather tidily, but for my part that impression is misleading. Let me illustrate what I mean.

One wishes to make an annotated list of articles, books, etc. on language/linguistics and the Chicano (exclusive of works about Spanish). Consider:

Margaret Rogde. "Learning to Speak English in the First Grade." The Texas Outlook, Vol. 22 (Sept. 1938) pp. 40-41.

Texas Outlook is the journal of the Texas State Teacher's Association. My note card reads

> Random advice about teaching English to Spanish speakers. One exercise is designed to teach the correct use of 'and' which presumably is difficult because "In Spanish 'and' is used after each noun."
> Another exercise suggests the following dialog.
> "Teacher: Who would like to see if the children in this row are clean? Lupe may look at the children in this row.
> Lupe: "Juan has dirty hands.' Or, Maria's hair is not combed.'

This article qualifies for inclusion in the bibliography in most ways. It is about Chicanos, language, and it is applied - certainly not theoretical. While it probably can't be considered scholarship, it is important to a historical understanding of the subject. In fact, it is representative of a sub-category of the literature which might be called something such as "early language pedagogy."

It is fascinating in somewhat the same way as a bad car wreck. It is characterized primarily by well meaning condescension and linguistic naivete.

More samples of this subcategory are:

California Department of Education. A Guide for Teachers of Beginning Non-English Speaking Children. Sacramento, California: State Department of Education. Bulletin No. 8. April 15, 1932. 68 pages.

> "An appraisal of this group [Mexican-Americans and others] uncovers qualities which our own fast-moving, highly materialistic civilization may well emulate. Our Mexican population has leisureliness; gay, light-hearted enjoyment of the present; a spirituality and quiet devotion; a passionate love of color, music, and dancing." And
> "Dirty children in a room of foreign children reflect directly on the teaching done there."

Thurman G. Rohr. A Study of the Correction of English Pronunciation of Latin American Pupils. M.Ed. Thesis. The University of Texas at Austin. 1948. 117 pages.

> "Poor English pronunciation is one of the greatest obstacles to the Latin-American who must eventually come into daily contact with English-speaking people."

These early language pedogogy articles are obviously useful though not very scholarly. Up to this point the area I had marked off for investigation is a workable one. Other interesting studies do not fit so well, necessitating either changing the descriptors, or ignoring some useful studies, or doing some tricky reasoning. Let me illustrate

this problem.

Some of the literature is about Chicanos but is superficially or questionably concerned with language. Most of the general book length works, from Bogardus' early The Mexican in the United States to Steiner's La Raza, are of this type. Similar to these are the master's theses "The Education of Spanish-Speaking Children in Texas" (U. T. Austin, 1957) by Carlos Calderon and "A Sociological Study of a Mexican School in San Antonio, Texas" (U. T. Austin, 1927) by James K. Harris. Works such as these are obviously important to an understanding of the whole sociolinguistic situation, and they make fascinating reading. James Harris, for example, began teaching at Navarro School, the subject of his study, in 1898. The thesis is full of snapshots and entirely lacking in bibliography. It is so highly quotable that you may find yourself reaching for ways to include it in talks like this one that have little to do with his subject. Viz, "Filthy homes are sources of all forms of skin diseases, such as itch, and other skin eruptions. There is seldom a case of diphtheria but all other ailments of childhood make up for it." (p.9) The Calderon thesis is likewise full of pictures, with a seeming specialization in bathrooms.

What does one do with such works when making a bibliography on applied Chicano linguistics? Leave them out because they are not really linguistic? Or include them because they are interesting and useful as background?

Other literature is more clearly linguistic but only questionable Chicano. The best example of this is the 1930 Master's thesis by Ruby Coon "The History of the Teaching of Spanish in Texas." This study was intended to be "a fairly comprehensive study of the progress made in the teaching of Spanish in the public and private schools of Texas [at all levels] since the coming of the Spaniards, and the actual status of the subject at the present time."

Much of the literature which is useful in the study of Chicano linguistics is even less Chicano than this. Should a bibliography focussed on language and any ethnic

group omit Rubin, Fishman, or Haugen on bilingualism? What about Sledd's article of a few years back entitled "Bidialectalism: The Linguistics of White Supremacy?" Or other work on blacks, black language, sociolinguistics, such as that by Labov, Shuy, and others? The fact is, most of the work done on social dialects in America has to do with blacks and not Chicanos. With regard to bilingual education one would be ill-advised to ignore the important work being produced in Canada on French and English. But what can be omitted then? By what temerity could Whorf be excluded or then Bloomfield and certainly Jesperson and at last Panini himself? This has become ridiculous, of course, but I have pursued this argument in order to make a point which goes a bit beyond the writing of bibliographies.

I have grown increasingly uncomfortable with the descriptors "applied Chicano linguistics." From the beginning of this work I have assumed some things regarding who would use such a bibliography for what purpose. Basically, I have thought any potential user would be much like myself in one very important way - eager to contribute something to the political efforts known as el movimiento without lapsing into propagandizing and without compromising scholarly standards. A bibliography of Chicano linguistics can be such a contribution but probably only if it is used by people who are trained in general linguistics. I am inclined to generalize beyond this point to comment on the social utility of ethnic studies relative to traditional academic disciplines but I will resist the temptation. There does seem to be a clear cut, if tentative, suggestion that goes beyond the bibliographic enterprise per se.

To return to the what I was developing earlier - the problems of doing an annotated bibliography - let me indicate some practical considerations.

1. Frustration #1 is locating the material. One seems doomed to have titles which he cannot locate anywhere. Using interlibrary loan helps, but the bibliographer is likely to face weeks of waiting and receiving nothing until one fateful date on which he receives 40 master's theses all to be returned in three days.

2. I think bibliographers are probably all more or less compulsive, the kind

of people who enjoy doing things neatly and completely. Like some cosmic sick joke, bibliographies cannot be done completely. The neurotic scholar faces the gnawing faceless anxiety of knowing that whenever he stops some title (probably the major work of the chairman at the university where he has just applied for a job) has been omitted.

3. The special problems of dealing with master's theses have been discussed by Dick Teschner in a presentation at one of the Jack Ornstein's U.T.E.P. meetings held last summer. Dick is a good bibliographer, i.e. truly far-gone in compulsiveness and adherence to standards. And so, since his paper was humorous and had only 400 footnotes he has declined to publish it. Write him for a copy.

4. Not the least discouraging aspect of this work is the boredom which has been the result of the so-called information explosion. In fact, with regard to my topic, the information explosion is synonymous with redundancy.

5. Some of these problems I anticipated, but one has been a surprise. That was the amount of peculiar physical effort involved. One works in libraries which are large and located long distances from parking lots. One has to carry note-cards from one to the other. 500 5x7 cards in a file box weigh 5 lbs. 8 oz. I found myself calculating whether unruled cards would weigh significantly less than ruled ones over the period of a year. The veteran bibliographer is easily spotted in a crowd. Like Warren Spahn, his dominant arm is abnormally long.

6. The tedium of proofreading reaches its apogee in the bibliography. It is more taxing, more mechanical, less intellectual, (a trained monkey should be able to do it, though a trained graduate student can't) than even error analysis.

7. But being a bibliographer has its rewards. What can compare with hearing your dean say "but it's only a bibliography, not original scholarship."?

The good scholarship in applied Chicano linguistics is found primarily in dissertations. This is a tradition begun by Barker, continued through Coltharp and Sawyer,

growing more "linguistic", or modern if you will, in the work of Gustavo González, Paul Murphy, Teschner, Brisk, Roger Thompson and others. About to be completed are a couple of very exciting ones - Lucía Elías-Olivarez' (of Pan American University) "Ways of Speaking in a Chicano Speech Community." This was excerpted at Swallow IV in San Diego as "Chicano Language Varieties in East Austin." Also Miguel Carranza's study of language attitudes among Chicanos in Chicago. This was done at Notre Dame under the direction of Julian Samora.

The following brief list of recent articles are representative of the "good" short scholarship, i.e. they are both interesting and rigorous.

Gumperz' "Verbal Strategies in Multilingual Communication" made the point in 1970 that code switching is not random and that it is a communication skill which speakers use as a verbal strategy in much the same way that skillful writers switch styles in a short story." His data was obtained in a Mexican-American community.

Marina Burt and Heidi Dulay focus on Chicanos in their study of second language acquisition and error analysis. Among other things they show that only 4.7% of the English errors made by their sample of Spanish-speaking Chicano children age 5-8 can be attributed to interference.

Politzer and Ramirez of Stanford have also done interesting work in error analysis and Ramirez alone has done a lengthy comparison of the English used by pupils in a monolingual and a bilingual school in California.

Many good short works are beginning to be found in collections such as Bills' Southwest Areal Linguistics and the Hernandez, Cohen, and Beltramo volume El Lenguaje de los Chicanos.

This section has necessarily been very brief. If still more brevity were required and it could include only one title, that would be the recent annotated bibliography by Teschner, Bills, and Craddock. It is an invalubale tool which it is a pleasure to read. It is bibliography as high art.

The bad scholarship has already been considered in large part. By "bad" I mean

lacking in scholarly rigor and, as I have indicated in several ways, not useless or uninteresting. This category is dominated by theses done in colleges of education, articles in teachers' magazines, and monographs written by teacher trainers. I have mentioned several works like these already, and I don't think it would be instructive to list more at this point. Teschner, Bills, and Craddock can be your guide in this regard if you are interested. They uncovered some of the same objectionable material I did.

The non-scholarship is perhaps the most interesting contribution I have to make. I have three sources in mind. Together they constitute varieties of Bloomfield's tertiary responses.

The first category is journalism. For example, in 1944 Time magazine ran a story on a Mexican comedian known as Tin Tan whose stock in trade was a monologue in pocho. It is reported that glossaries were hawked outside the theater. In 1957 The New Republic reported on Sen. Yarborough's early efforts at getting a bilingual education act passed. Editorials which appeared in the Harlingen, Texas, Valley Morning Star on November 16 and 23, 1975 is attached to this paper. Journalism is a useful if non-scholarly source of information.

A second useful category of non-scholarship is exemplified by the argument for a speech course requirement at Pan American University. This is attached also. It is the kind of thing that is often argued orally and seldom written, I think. But there must be any number of written school directives which concern language and the Mexican-American that are more or less available.

Conversational statements regarding Chicano linguistics make up my third category. This is an enormously engaging source of information, though difficult to use. Personally, I write down what I hear, as soon as possible after it occurs, and put it in a file marked "absurd statements about language."

To review main points

1. A bibliography on something like bilingualism or language contact is likely to be more useful than a bibliography which is defined ethnically.
2. The traditional sources of information- theses, dissertations, articles, monographs are difficult to use for a variety of reasons.
3. Some non-traditional sources, such as journalism, school directives, and conversations provide much of interest and use.

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